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Spiritan Identity and Vocation

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Born in 1970, Olaf Derenthal, a German Spiritan, made his final consecration to the apostolate in Rue Lhomond, Paris on September 5, 2015 and was ordained deacon the next day. A trained nurse from Warburg, Germany, he studied theology as a lay person at the University of Münster and is currently pursuing a Masters degree in Missiology and Interreligious Dialogue in Institut Catholique de Paris. He worked as a MaZler (Missionary for a Time) in a dispensary in Kenya (1996-1997), in an HIV/AIDS counseling and treatment center in Tanzania (2002-2005), and in a mobile clinic for primary health care in Central African Republic (2008-2011).

Translated from French by Roberta Hatcher

"YOU ARE NOT CHRISTIANS, BUT I ALSO KNOW THAT...[YOU] KNOW GOD"¹ INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE – A SPIRITAN VOCATION

Introduction

In the course of [the] war, multiple identities fade and the identity most meaningful in relation to the conflict comes to dominate. *That identity is almost always* defined by religion. Psychologically, religion provides the most reassuring and supportive justification for struggle against “godless” forces.²

This is the analysis of the American political scientist, Samuel Huntington, on the role of religion at the core of conflicts between peoples in the late 20th century. This bellicose book has of course not gone unchallenged, yet despite much criticism it has exerted a powerful influence on the way many contemporaries view the world today. The “clash of civilizations” refers, in the case of religions, to Islam against Christianity and vice versa. In fact, recent events appear to prove Huntington right. Take the month of April 2014 and look at just a few newspaper headlines found online.

Syria: A Dutch Jesuit Priest Savagely Assassinated in Homs (*Le Figaro*, April 4, 2014);

Israel Suspends Peace Negotiations with Palestinians (*Le Monde*, 24 April 2014);

Central African Republic: 1,300 Muslims Flee Bangui (*Libération*, 27 April 2014).

At the heart of all these events, a religious odor permeates the site of violence. Yet the three religions involved, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, speak of their God essentially as follows: “God of tenderness and compassion” (Exod. 34:6),³ “God is Love” (1 John 4:16), and “God: who forgives, the Merciful” (S.1:1).⁴

Inter-religious encounter—under the sign of reciprocal violence or mutual respect?

Before launching into a reflection on the roots of our Spiritan charism, I think it is important to recall that it is never religions engaging in communication, but their faithful who meet each other, men, women and children (!) who let themselves be inspired by their faith and then put it into practice. We are never

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the incarnation of “pure doctrine,” which moreover would be nothing but a phantasm.

What is the special place of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit faced with a world in upheaval? Might there be a specifically Spiritan type of response to Huntington’s thesis that civilizational and especially religious alterity is the source of violence in our era? Could we have something to contribute by drawing from the wells of our own missionary tradition?

Two of the above examples take place in contexts where a Christian identity finds itself confronted with a Muslim identity. That is why in my remarks I will emphasize the Muslim-Christian encounter in today’s world, amicable or conflictual.

I think it important to note from the outset that my personal experience in this realm is certainly not sufficient to draw any definitive conclusions. My thoughts are rather the manifestation of an inquiry that is only at its beginning. I am deeply impressed by the confreres who have devoted their missionary life to witnessing their Christian faith in all humility to our Muslim brothers and sisters. I lack such practice, so I run the risk of thinking too much in the abstract. And yet, I would like to embark on this challenge, very simply because it moves me and distresses me. And it calls me into question: “And you, as a Spiritan missionary, what are you doing about it?” The question is not incidental, it is fundamentally a matter of identity.

RESPONDING AS A SPIRITAN: WHAT SOURCES?

The Bible and Church Tradition

Since this essay seeks in particular to explore the richness of Spiritan sources, I will limit myself to a brief overview of biblical and magisterial documents.

Our faith is rooted in biblical witness, leading to a living and vital relation with Jesus the Christ, God become Man.⁵ What then would be Jesus of Nazareth’s response to what we call today the “theology of religions”? Did he not leave us clear conduct to follow when we encounter believers from other religious traditions?

A first assessment can be disappointing: “*It seems at first that no [. . .]* (italics original) he isn’t asked about the meaning of these nations and their religion in relation to God’s plan and his Kingdom.”⁶

Yet, Jesus crossed the boundary of his own religion, Judaism, to meet with adherents of other religions, “and the attitude he

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adopts towards them is illuminating.”⁷ We are reminded here above all of his relationship with the Samaritans: according to biblical memory, relations between this community and the Jews had for centuries been filled with mutual hate and contempt. Yet it was this same Jesus who would astonishingly take the first step in their direction and overcome the hate that separated these two profoundly linked peoples. And shortly after the Samaritans’ refusal (Luke 9:35), he will tell the parable of the Good Samaritan, thereby shattering the stereotyped image of the Samaritans of his day (cf. Luke 10: 29-37). In addition, he does not hesitate to heal a Samaritan leper who will be the only one to come back and bless him; the sick Jews that he goes on to heal do not do so (cf. Luke 17: 11-19). Finally, he has contact with the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well (John 4: 1-42): “The objective of Jesus Christ’s move towards meeting the nations [...] is that he wants to discover the other, to understand the other in his own reality and to walk together with him.”⁸ As Spiritans we can feel ourselves specially called to imitate such a position of audacious openness.

But it is only in our era that the Church has begun to have great respect for the faith of others and to ask itself about the role of non-Christian religions in the salvation of peoples.

We cannot here examine in detail all the Church has said over the centuries concerning non-Christian religions. But in short, we can note two fundamental things: first, although the Church has long insisted on a fairly exclusivist reading of the principle, “Outside the Church there is no salvation” (Cyprian of Carthage), it has nonetheless never refused to believe that “salvation” is also accessible to people of good will who do not know Christ. But it is only in our era that the Church has begun to have great respect for the faith of others and to ask itself about the role of non-Christian religions in the salvation of peoples.⁹ In his Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis expresses his conviction that these religions “can be channels which the Holy Spirit raises up in order to liberate non-Christians from atheistic immanentism or from purely individual religious experiences.”¹⁰

Obviously, such a profound shift in the Catholic view of other religions is bound to have repercussions among members of the Congregation for the understanding of our mission which, from its beginning, has seen itself entirely devoted to the evangelization of peoples. Moreover, to reverse the perspective, we are convinced that it is precisely the missionary experiences on the margins of the West that have contributed, among others things, to making the magisterium revisit its “theology of religions.”

Our Founders, In their Time

Of course, it would be an anachronism to seek concrete guidance from our founders on how to live in an evangelical

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manner with our non-Christian neighbors, particularly Muslims. Claude-François Poullart des Places (1679-1709) and Francis Libermann (1802-1852) cannot give us responses to questions that their contemporaries never asked them. Nevertheless, couldn't we try to carefully study the Spirit that inhabits them, in order to then dare ask ourselves what they might perhaps say to us today.

As for Poullart, we find no explicit reference to non-Christian religions in his notes. His goal was the evangelization of the poor, in France and elsewhere, by priests who were themselves poor. His spiritual starting point was the consecration of the small, young community to the Holy Spirit on May 27, 1703 at St.-Etienne des Grès.¹¹ I will return to this point.

Nearly a century later, with Libermann, the situation changed. His foundation, the Missionary Society of the Sacred Heart of Mary, began to send the first wave of missionaries to the Senegambian coast, a territory in which Islam was already firmly rooted.

To underscore how original our founder's sensibility was, let us keep in mind the spirit of that age: "It must be acknowledged that during the 19th century, the ideological centers of Europe deliberately spread negative ideas about Islam, presenting Muslim norms, customs and behaviors as running counter to the values proclaimed in Europe."¹²

In fact, at one point, Libermann, very concerned, saw Islam as a significant obstacle to his missionary projects. In a letter to the Minister of Religion he wrote:¹³ "I join our missionaries in requesting the withdrawal of the concession that has been granted to them for the construction of a mosque in Mayotte."¹⁴ Further, he sent his confreres in Africa a little book penned by the Abbé Francis Bourgade titled "*Les Soirées de Carthage*," whose objective was to "confound Islamism and establish the truth of the Christian religion"¹⁵ by demonstrating "by way of the Quran itself, the superiority of Jesus Christ and the Gospel over Mohammed and his book."¹⁶ In this context it is important to note that the goal Libermann pursues is not to combat Muslims but "to prepare them to receive the Gospel."¹⁷

This desire to see Muslims convert to Christianity did not prevent him, however, from expressing his high esteem for the Muslim king of Dakar, Eliman, as well as for the king's nephew Suleiman and all the chiefs. In a letter he addressed to the king, we find a fairly stunning remark: "You are not Christians [...]; but [...] you know God."¹⁸ Essentially, Libermann was expressing

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a conviction that went counter to the teachings of the Church at the time. It is clear that for him Islam allows one to discover God, the creator and ruler who helps distinguish between good and evil. But we also note that in the same document, Libermann speaks of “a countless number of men who do not know God”¹⁹ on the African continent, referring to the adherents of traditional religions. Unlike the case of Islam, Libermann does not attribute knowledge of God to them.

A fairly well-known episode is the so-called “military squad affair.” It concerned the question of whether Libermann’s missionaries could allow Muslim soldiers to be present at Mass on the occasion of the dedication of a chapel.²⁰ Here, too, Libermann shows his usual goodwill at a moment when his brothers were more rigid: “we could have let them in.”²¹ This flexibility was in no way a sign of weakness. On the contrary, it demonstrates instead a concern for the souls of all men: “. . . attendance at Church ceremonies would produce an excellent effect on the souls of infidels.”²²

Besides Libermann, we would like to take a look at how two other early missionaries lived their encounters with Muslims in Senegambia. Two letters by Fr. Arragon and one by Fr. Briot provide moving testimony. To his superior in France, Arragon describes their visits to king Eliman and to the marabouts of the town. In an atmosphere of mutual esteem they exchange their religious convictions:

. . . the king drew from his bookshelf [...] a Quran wrapped in cowhide [...]. It was a very beautiful Arab manuscript [...]. His African majesty showed us, on one of its pages, an ink drawing of the tomb of Mohammed, and on another a map of Mecca and Medina [...]; we presented him with some of our images [...] One of them portrayed the adoration of the Magi; I commented to him that there was one of his color who came to adore Jesus, the Son of God. At these words ‘Son of God’ he replied that here was the main point on which we did not agree; which did not prevent him from accepting three medals of the Holy Virgin (440).²³

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At the conclusion of this respectful exchange, each one keeps his faith, but the encounter produces a remarkable effect: “The longer the meeting went on, the more we became good friends.”

Our Founders, Revisited

What do we wish to preserve from our founders? How can we be true and authentic heirs of that which they have entrusted to us? By imitating a model that has petrified over the course of generations? Or in keeping their spirit alive and life-giving? The choice seems clear: "Tradition does not consist of preserving the ashes but of keeping the fire burning," as a well-known proverb puts it.

On the day of Pentecost, 1703, Poullart des Places and his first "poor schoolboys" laid the foundation of our Congregation—without being able to foresee what would follow from this act. They established a young community "consecrated to the Holy Spirit."²⁵ In so doing, they expressed their willingness to let themselves be guided by his impetus. Beyond any historical context, it is this heritage which has been entrusted to us up to the present day: to obey what the Spirit tells us. But how can we be sure that it takes its source in him? The model par excellence, Paul of Tarsus, details the fruits of the Spirit: "Charity, joy, peace, forbearance, helpfulness, goodness, faith in others." (Gal. 5: 22f). This entire list of effects seems to me a guide to attitudes when we go to meet the other, those who see God differently.

But let's go even further in our reflection on our consecration by and to the Holy Spirit by letting ourselves be guided by the German Spiritan exegete Felix Porsch (1928-2001). In his book *Anwalt der Glaubenden*²⁶ on the action of the Holy Spirit according to St. John, Porsch highlights the dynamic character of the virtue of the spirit. Throughout the history of Christianity, beginning with the proclamation of the Good News by Jesus Christ, ever new dimensions of the same Gospel have emerged.²⁷ Admittedly at times there were religious convictions that surely did not have their source in God's truth. But in trusting in Jesus's promise that the Holy Spirit will be with us forever (see John 14: 16), Porsch encourages Christians to risk a new impulse: what is new must be given the chance to unfold and to hold firm.²⁸ Is it surprising that Porsch lists, in 1978 (!), dialogue with other religions among the new paths?²⁹ We believe that the deep respect for the faith of those who believe differently is a new dimension of Christ's message. The other makes me examine even more deeply my own religious certitudes under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. Mistrust towards the other, on the other hand, risks creating a wall for the Spirit who "blows where he pleases" (John 3: 8).

Since the Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964) by Paul VI, the doctrinal basis for such a commitment is already set forth. It falls

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to us, the missionaries, to put it into practice, in faithfulness to our initial consecration by and to the Holy Spirit.

In most of the countries where Spiritans work, Muslims represent our neighbors, whether it be in the Parisian suburbs or the Central African countryside. We are called to go and meet them.

Libermann fully adhered to this devotion to the Spirit. But his attachment always professes to renew itself in contact with “the spirit of the age.”³⁰ In March 1848 he took a stand in favor of the new democratic system, at a time when the majority of the clergy was still longing for the *Ancien Régime*. Unequivocally he exhorted one of his confreres: “We must do good and fight evil in the state and the spirit of the times in which we live [...] Let us therefore embrace the new order with candor and simplicity and bring to it the spirit of the Holy Gospel.”

Of course, we would do a great disservice to Libermann if we were to interpret this statement as a call for blind submission to any societal tendency. But we discover here the Libermannian principle that avoids all confrontation for confrontation’s sake, but which rather tries to read the “signs of the times” with sympathy, with no preconceived ideas, in order to then participate in building a still better world, filled with the Good News. And if interreligious encounter and confrontation were signs of such a “new order”? Perhaps Libermann would tell us: “Welcome it, and actively take part in it so that this new ‘global village’ characterized by religious diversity may become a place of peace and mutual respect.” René You even imagines that “Libermann would certainly have ranked the encounter with Muslims among his top priorities, if not the top priority of missionaries today.”³¹

Coming to Deeper Awareness

The rediscovery of “seeds of truth”³² in non-Christian religions has not been without repercussions for us Spiritans. Even if, during the Second Vatican Council, the Superior General, Mgr. Lefebvre, was violently opposed to any recognition of others’ faiths, a new inspiration seized our Congregation. A religious community with evangelization at its heart could not remain unmoved by such reorientations. The theology of missions and the theology of religions are two faces of the same coin.

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And now with the appearance of the new *Spiritans Rule of Life* in 1987 we are all invited to put interreligious dialogue at the center of our missionary commitments: “We take as our own the points the Church is currently stressing in its Mission: [...] Mission as dialogue” (SRL 13.1)³³ and “we strive in every way we

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can for a fruitful coming together of local cultural and religious traditions with the gospel of Christ” (SRL 16.1). Our missionary vocation no longer opposes evangelization to dialogue with the faithful of other religions, but rather considers them in their complementarity.

To delve more deeply into this aspect in light of our Spiritan charism, three important meetings towards general chapters took place. The first two were specifically devoted to Muslim-Christian dialogue, while the third addressed the encounter with non-Christian religions in general.

The first conference was held in Dakar, Senegal in 1989³⁴ and the second in Banjul, Gambia, in 1991.³⁵ In analyzing a certain evolution in our Congregation, Robert Ellison C.S.Sp. notes the following: “The “mistrust [. . .] towards the idea that dialogue is an authentic form of mission has noticeably decreased” (3).³⁶

In September 2011 a third “meeting of Spiritans engaged in interreligious dialogue and dialogue with other cultures” was held in Rome. Its final message “And Who is My Neighbor?”³⁷ offers a profound reflection on the meaning of interreligious dialogue. It is above all not a verbal act, but “an inclination of the heart and of an open mind”³⁸ With good reason we can find in these words an echo of our consecration by and to the Holy Spirit.”

Shabani

I remember very well the young Muslim boy who was grievously ill but always cheerful and smiling. Shabani was an orphan and infected from birth with HIV. When I met him he was living with his aunt in a small village near Arusha in Tanzania. At that time I was working as a mission aid worker with an Archdiocesan HIV/AIDS project. “Where is he, your own God or even mine, in your sufferings, Shabani?” I wondered. Before drawing someone’s blood to test it for HIV we didn’t discuss only medical issues, we also talked about God. That was where I heard for the first time Muslims professing their faith, their trust in one God all merciful and forgiving. Me, a Christian, and them, Muslims: we stood before the same creator, even if they expressed it differently. Faced with the most existential condition of man, namely life and death, the difference in doctrinal formulations lost all their importance for me, and the divine mystery created invisible bonds. Muslim people living with HIV allowed me to enter into contact with their spiritual world. Of course, these were only momentary contacts, but they stirred my desire to delve more deeply into the interreligious question.

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Our Identity and Our Spiritan Vocation

Today, as a Spiritan in formation, I cannot put aside this experience. I believe deeply that our Congregation is called in a unique way to take the lead in the encounter with those who believe differently, to feel the breath of the Holy Spirit beyond our borders, to give hope to humanity in building a more human, a more just and more peaceful world. In doing this we bear witness to the Risen Christ.

I have lingered at length over our two founders. To our contemporary world I hear them say "Become creators of dialogue!" But this task is not entrusted to a few specialists. All of us are called to let all our commitments, parish, pastoral and social, become infused with this opening towards the other in his religious difference: "Dialogue is an art of living."³⁹

One often hears it said, "But the Muslims have no interest in dialoguing. Why is it always we Christians who think we have to make the first step?" Well, precisely because we are Christians. For us, God became man, he lived among us, and this life was a journey towards the other. Through the generations, Christian doctrine has examined and developed the mystery of the Trinity to say that which cannot be expressed materially, namely that God is encounter and exchange in his deepest being. It is why our Spiritan identity cannot be one of "arms folded." We are called to open our arms and our doors.

John-Paul II provided us a model. In 1986, he gathered representatives from all the world's great religions around the tomb of St. Francis of Assisi for a day of prayer for peace, each according to his tradition.

In September 1994, during a conference at the Chevilly-Larue Spiritan House, the former "mission seminary," the theologian Père Claude Geffré spoke of the "uniqueness of Christianity as a religion of dialogue."⁴⁰ If we pause to reflect that in the same building, on the eve of Vatican Council II, one could hear the "Song for the Departing Missionaries of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit"⁴¹ which glorified "the mission site" as "a battlefield," we cannot overestimate the magnitude of change in the missionary paradigm which has occurred in the space of only two generations.

And yet, we are absolutely not closing our eyes to all forms of fanaticism in certain communities with which we are trying to establish relations. Let's not fool ourselves: to put into practice "Christianity as a religion of dialogue" (Geffré), to reach out in order to get close to the other, particularly in the middle of

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conflicts, carries dangerous risks. Currently, Mgr. Dieudonné Nzapalainga, the Spiritan Archbishop of Bangui in Central African Republic, is a moving example. Since the outbreak of the violent crisis in the Central African Republic, he has not stopped calling for an end to the vicious cycle of violence and counter-violence. Hand in hand with the Imam Kobine Lamaya, president of the Central African Muslim community, and the Protestant pastor Nicolas Guerekoyame-Gbangou, he called for collaboration between Muslims and Christians for peace.⁴² Their appeals are challenging because they aim to put an end to the logic of “might makes right.” In truth, it is not a war between religions; it is a murderous struggle for money and power.

But also, in less dramatic circumstances, every interreligious encounter must be prepared to face difficulties, failure, misunderstandings, perhaps also interior wounds. The risk is omnipresent. At yet, it is Christ himself who calls us to this path, He, who made himself vulnerable even to death on the cross, out of love for all humanity in all its diversity.

Let us put our faith, then, “in the Holy Spirit who leads both us and them to the complete truth” (SRL 16.3).

*Olaf Derenthal, C.S.Sp.
Paris*

Endnotes

¹Francis Libermann to King Eliman of Dakar, January 26, 1848. Christian de Mare, ed., *A Spiritan Anthology* (2011), 303-306, here 305.

²Samuel P Huntington, *Le choc des civilisations* (Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 1997), 296. (*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 267.

³All biblical citations are taken from *The New Jerusalem Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1990).

⁴*Le Coran*. Translated by D. Masson (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1967).

⁵In saying this, we are not forgetting the importance of the Sacraments as a place to meet Christ.

⁶Lucien Legrand, “Jésus et l’Eglise Primitive. Un éclairage biblique,” in *Spiritus* 138 (1995), 64-77, here 65.

⁷*Ibid* 67.

⁸Joseph Kemtchang Koudé, *Les enjeux théologiques du dialogue interreligieux dans la révélation chrétienne* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2009), 19. I think it important to note that the author, from Chad, lives in a majority Muslim country.

⁹The beginnings of this shift are noted in several magisterial documents of the Second Vatican Council and what followed. I will limit myself to listing them without exploring their content in depth: The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (1964); The Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate* (1965); and the Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis*

Humanae (1965). At the same time and subsequently, were drafted the Encyclicals, *Ecclesiam Suam*, by Paul VI (1964) and *Redemptoris Missio*, by John-Paul II (1990) as well as the orientations, “*Dialogue and Proclamation*,” by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (1991). These orientations emphasize the productive relations and tensions that tie proclamation of the Gospel to dialogue between the faithful of different religions. They also recall and elaborate the four different levels on which “interreligious dialogue” occurs: The dialogue 1) of life, 2) of action 3) of theological exchange, and 4) of religious experience (no. 42).

¹⁰Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel, Evangelii Gaudium* (Paris : Ed. Salvator, 2013). Trans. <http://www.vatican.va>, 189.

¹¹See Christian de Mare, *Aux racines de l'arbre Spiritain. Claude François Poullart des Places (1679-1709). Écrits et Études*, Coll. *Mémoire Spiritaine*, Études et documents 4, (Paris, 1998), 335.

¹²Jacques Waardenburg, *Islam et Occident face à face* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1998), 17.

¹³For the Libermann writings cited in this article, I will refer to the 13 volumes plus appendices and supplements of “*Notes et documents relatifs à la vie et l'oeuvre du Vénérable François-Marie-Paul Libermann, supérieur général de la congrégation du Saint Esprit et du saint Coeur*,” edited by Alphonse Cabon C.S.Sp. (Paris: Maison mère, 1929-1952), henceforth N.D. with the volume number in roman numerals.

¹⁴N.D., 74.

¹⁵N.D. IX, 176.

¹⁶*Ibid*, 177. The aforementioned book was written in the form of a dialogue between a priest and two Muslim scholars. Their conversations take place in a fraternal atmosphere. The priest's arguments are always the most powerful, and yet, the book's conclusion remains open-ended: the three men part, each remaining faithful to his own religion. Will the Muslims later become Christians? The question remains in suspense. See: François Bourgade, *Les Soirées de Carthage* (Paris: Firmin Didot frères, 1847).

¹⁷*Ibid*, 177.

¹⁸N.D. X, 23. In the archives there are two versions of this letter. I quote from the shorter one here, written by Libermann himself. Even if René You considers the style of this document “almost paternalistic [...] and technically almost childish,” I think it is very important for trying to decipher Libermann's innermost thoughts regarding this non-Christian with whom he wishes to establish a relationship without ever having encountered him. See René You, “*Spiritains dans la Maison de l'islam*” published online at <http://www.spiritains.org/parole/pavie/you2004.htm>.

¹⁹N.D. X, 23.

²⁰The affair is described in detail in Libermann's letter to Mgr. Truffet; see N.D. IX, 222-225.

²¹*Ibid*, 223.

²²*Ibid*, 223. Here Libermann draws on the views of his friend and counselor Desgenettes.

²³See N.D. VIII, 437-448. Unfortunately the limited space of this article does not permit an in-depth analysis of these very revealing documents.

²⁴*Ibid*, 440.

²⁵de Mare, *op.cit.*, 335.

²⁶Felix Porsch, *Anwalt der Glaubenden: das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach dem Zeugnis des Johannesevangeliums* (Stuttgart : Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1978). [Believer's Advocate: The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Testimony of St. John's Gospel.]

²⁷See *Ibid*, 94.

²⁸“Dennoch muß diesem Neuen aber Gelegenheit gegeben werden, sich zu entfalten und zu ‘behaupten’ ...” in *Ibid* 95.

²⁹See *Ibid*, 96.

³⁰*N.D.* X, 151.

³¹René You, *op.cit.*

³²It is in fact an expression penned by St. Justin (100-165). 1,800 years later, the Second Vatican Council returned to this conception, notably in its declaration, “*Nostra Aetate*” (1965).

³³Citations from the new edition: Congregation of the Holy Spirit, *Spiritun Rule of Life*, Rome 2013.

³⁴See its closing message, “Evangelization in a multi-religious Context,” General Council, *Spiritun Life* No. 14, Spiritans and Islam (Rome, 2002), p. 97-99.

³⁵See its closing message, “The Hope within Us: Our Mission to the Muslim World,” *Ibid*, p. 91-97.

³⁶Ellison, Robert. Editorial in *Ibid*, p. 1-12.

³⁷See Congregation of the Holy Spirit, *Spiritun News*, No. 274 (Rome, 2011).

³⁸*Ibid*. See also the recommendations for the 2012 General Chapter meeting which followed from this conference, in : The General Council, *20th General Chapter CSSp, Bagamoyo 2012. Instrumentum Laboris* (Rome 2012).

³⁹Final message of the Spiritan meeting on Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, in: Maison Générale: *Brèves Nouvelles Spiritaines* No. 274 (Rome, 2011). See note 37.

⁴⁰Claude Geffré, “La place des religions dans le plan du salut” in *Spiritus* 138/36 (February 1995), 78-97.

⁴¹The words of the song were written by Mgr. Le Roy (1854-1938), 15th Spiritan Superior General. It opens with “Soldiers of Christ, the Church calls us . . .,” declaring in the fifth verse: “War with Satan! On the far shore of his Empire, let us wrest the shreds . . .”

⁴²See the interview of Mgr. Dieudonné Nzapalainga, “RCA: Construire un pont pour réconcilier un pays,” in *Pentecôte sur le monde*, no. 875 (Paris, Mai-Juin 2014), 31.